Session: Integration of synthesis techniques with "acoustic" music (Joint with Musical Acoustics)

Invited Paper:
The “Concerto for Conductor”: a new musical form
by Teresa Marrin Nakra
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In May of 2001, at Boston’s Symphony Hall, conductor Gil Rose walked out onto an empty stage with a coil of wire trailing from the back of his jacket. As he raised his hands in a starting gesture, the first chords of the Grieg Piano Concerto rang out. Subsequent gestures finished the initial flourish of the Grieg, and after several more bars of sampled orchestral and environmental music, orchestral musicians started slowly filtering onto the stage. The rest of the performance featured some very fun and energetic music making, reflecting both a sense of humor and a sense of inventiveness with a completely new form.

This was the premiere performance of the world’s first “Concerto for Conductor.” The new musical form was the brainchild of this author, who wanted to develop a way to combine the “Conductor’s Jacket” sensor interface with live musicians on-stage. Composer John Oswald, whose imaginative setting was highly praised by the Boston press, was chosen and commissioned because of his reputation for inventive use of sampled sound. Aspects of his composition, the electronic systems behind it, and the possibilities for future Conductor Concertos will be discussed in the public presentation of this paper.